

Late Blight of Celery

Late blight of celery (*Septoria petroselini* Desm. var. *apii* Br. & Car.) is the worst enemy of the celery grower. It begins as small brown or dead spots in the leaves and as time goes on, these get larger and more numerous until the whole leaf is affected and dies off. The fungus which causes these spots spreads its spores readily and as celery thrives best in a rather moist situation favorable to fungus growth, the disease once started is likely to spread very rapidly. Not only do the attacks of this disease weaken and dwarf the plants, but blight on the leaves will also cause the plants to rot when stored for winter.

The fungus which causes the blight is carried over winter in old dead leaves and stalks, in manure to which celery refuse has been added and in the soil itself.

Control

Control is readily obtained by careful spraying with Bordeaux mixture (4-4-50). When the spores of the fungus are carried to the leaves, the fungicide deposited there kills them before they can start growth. It is, therefore, in the nature of a preventative and will be successful in so far as it is put on before the leaf spotting has commenced.

Spray with a fine mist. Begin shortly after the plants are set out, or on the seed bed if signs of the disease are noticed there. Continue to spray at about two week intervals until the plants are almost mature, the intervals between spraying being varied according to the weather and the absence of the disease.

Wash sprayed plants before they are put up for sale to get rid of any spray residue; spray spots are likely to render the stalks unattractive on the market.

If the disease once becomes very bad it is difficult to check, so every effort should be made to prevent it by spraying before it shows.

Copper-lime dust is also effective in the control of celery blight and may be used instead of Bordeaux where it is more practical to dust than to spray.

